

Governor forms task force to review telecom outsourcing

Governor Sonny Perdue has formed a 15-member task force to review telecommunications policy in Georgia and identify a "manageable and sustainable approach" to outsourcing the state's telecommunications services.

Shortly after forming the task force, Governor Perdue also recommended that GTA discontinue the Converged Communications Outsourcing Project (CCOP), which sought to outsource and upgrade state government's telecommunications and information technology services.

The task force is led by G. Wayne Clough, Ph.D., president of the **Georgia Institute of Technology**. It is expected to issue a written report in April 2003. GTA will assist the task force and offer information gathered from state agencies and local governments about telecommunications and computing requirements, costs and funding.

Task force to gather data, make recommendations

The task force will gather additional information that's needed to make decisions about the future of Georgia's telecommunications infrastructure.

It will analyze:

- cost-effective alternatives for improving the delivery of telecommunications services consistent with the business needs of state government
- cost-effective alternatives for providing distributive computing services and improving their administration
- potential impact on economic development throughout the state
- balancing the costs between urban and rural areas and the disparity of services between metropolitan Atlanta and other areas of Georgia
- enabling state and local government entities to stay current with telecommunications advances without additional capital outlay
- budget implications, costs and savings.

In announcing the task force, Governor Perdue said, "It is important for the state to step back and reassess our needs in information technology. In these tough financial times, we have an obligation to identify and implement the most cost-effective solutions for the people of Georgia."

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New online services benefit Georgia business owners

The State of Georgia is offering business owners a faster, more convenient way to obtain a state sales tax identification number and a provisional Federal Employee Identification Number (FEIN). A national pilot project is making both services available online.

Obtaining a sales tax ID number used to take about three days. Now business owners can simply visit the Georgia state portal at www.georgia.gov and click on the Online Business Registration link. After the appropriate information is entered and processed, an ID number is mailed by the **Georgia Department of Revenue (DOR)**.

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Revised tech policy makes agency reviews easier

State agencies are finding it easier to obtain approvals for certain kinds of technology initiatives. That's because they are now able to grant approvals themselves without GTA involvement.

GTA has revised the Technology Review Policy, which sets forth requirements for its review of agency technology initiatives, by delegating the authority to approve technology initiatives to each agency's IT coordinator.

As a result, technology initiatives that cost less than \$50,000 and comply with enterprise policies, standards and requirements are no longer subject to prior GTA review and approval.

The revised policy enables state agencies to focus their limited resources on initiatives with the greatest impact on operations.

The decision to delegate approval authority resulted from experience with the review policy and information gathered through agency strategic plans and budget requests. The revised policy enables state agencies to focus their limited resources on initia-

tives with the greatest impact on operations.

GTA is continuing to review technology initiatives costing \$50,000 or more prior to project commencement unless they are specifically exempted in the review policy. GTA review and approval is required regardless of whether funds have been made available, the funding source or who is expected to perform the work.

Tech reviews help state to leverage its purchasing power

Technology reviews help to ensure that proposed expenditures meet agency business needs while identifying opportunities for interoperability and data sharing among agencies. As a result, they enable state government to leverage its purchasing power to obtain the best value on products and services at the lowest cost.

Procedures for GTA's review of agency requests for technology will remain unchanged. GTA will continue to complete technology reviews within 25 calendar days whenever feasible. GTA account managers will also continue to acknowledge receipt of agency requests, facilitate their timely review and alert agencies whenever a review may extend beyond 25 calendar days.

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GTA issues state's first IT expenditures report

GTA has issued a report about information technology expenditures in Georgia state agencies for FY 2002. For the first time, the report makes it possible to easily see how much is spent on IT to support specific categories of government services.

The purpose of the report is to ensure accurate budgeting and accounting for IT expenditures. State law requires GTA to collect information about IT expenditures from agencies each year and compile a report for distribution to state leaders.

For FY 2002, agencies reported spending a total of \$442.5 million on information technology. State funds accounted for \$217.45 million of the total amount with the remainder coming primarily from the federal government. These amounts do not include expenditures by the Board of Regents, Department of Labor or for electronic voting machines.

The largest amount—\$196.2 million, or 44.3 percent of total expenditures—was spent on health and human services. Other service categories, amounts and percentages are

- general government: \$109.63 million or 24.78 percent
- public safety: \$60.56 million or 13.69 percent
- physical and economic development: \$49.47 million or 11.18 percent
- education: \$26.61 million or 6.01 percent.

IT expenditures include staff, hardware, software, telecom and data services, and computer supplies.

The full report, which covers several hundred pages, is available on GTA's Web site at www.gta.georgia.gov. ■

GTA joins state portal

If you need information or services from GTA, you no longer have to wade through organization charts or division descriptions. Officially launched on January 15, the new GTA Web site has joined Georgia's state portal, following its style of emphasizing service to Georgia's citizens over bureaucratic organization.

GTA's site, www.gta.georgia.gov, offers easy access to services available through GTA, current news, updates about technology initiatives, statewide technology policies, procurement opportunities and careers with GTA.

The state portal at www.georgia.gov is developed and maintained by the GeorgiaNet division of GTA and provides links to all state agencies. Although most links go to state Web sites that were already in existence, GeorgiaNet encourages each agency to develop a direct presence on the portal. GTA joins the **Department of Human Resources**, which was the first agency

to place its site on the portal. The new **Office of the Inspector General** is slated to make an appearance in the next few weeks.

"GTA's new site has more substance and input from throughout GTA, as well as a focus on what we do and how we help Georgia government work better," said Andy Rogers of GTA's communications office, manager of the site. "Our old site didn't accurately reflect who we are now. It was GTA in startup mode."

"Georgia has been a leader in state Web development, but the challenge is to remain at the forefront," said GeorgiaNet's Creative Vision Director Bill Overall. "As the agency responsible for developing and maintaining the portal, I believe it's important for GTA's Web site to serve as an example for other agencies in Georgia and nationally." ■



GTA's new Web site focuses on what we do and how we help Georgia government work better.

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GTA received CCOP bids from two vendors on November 15, 2002. However, one of the vendors—a team known as enVisionGeorgia with IBM as prime vendor and Sprint, Resource Network International and Enterasys as key subcontractors—withdrawn January 3, 2003, citing fluctuation in the telecommunications industry and an uncertain economic environment.

The second bidder was ConnectGeorgia, another bid team composed of BellSouth, AT&T, Electronic Data Systems and its key subcontractors, Cingular Wireless, Cisco Systems, Information Management Systems and Science Applications International Corporation.

As originally proposed, CCOP was estimated at \$1.8 billion over 10 years. The RFP issued in 2002 covered local, long distance, and wireless phone services; high-speed online access; local area networks; and personal computing equipment and support for state government offices and public school systems. ■

Task force includes leaders from throughout Georgia

G. Wayne Clough, Ph.D., president of the Georgia Institute of Technology, chairs the Governor's telecom task force. The other 14 members are

- **Dave Baker**, Vice President, Law and Public Policy - Earthlink, Inc.
- **Joe Bankoff**, Partner - King and Spalding
- **Roy Campbell**, Former Mayor - Thomasville
- **Steve Chaddick**, Senior Vice President - CIENA Corporation
- **Dick Cook**, President & CEO - Mapics
- **James Edenfield**, President and CEO - American Software, Inc.
- **Bryant K. Isaacs**, President, Network Technologies - ARRIS
- **James Lester**, CIO - AFLAC and Chairman - GTA Board of Directors
- **Jeff Lukken**, Mayor of LaGrange and Owner - Lukken Chevrolet
- **Tom Noonan**, Chairman, President and CEO - Internet Security Systems
- **Todd Tibbetts**, CFO - Tibs Group, Inc.
- **James Tysinger**, Retired Former State Senator
- **Joanne Walter**, Vice President, Strategic Marketing - NCR Retail Division
- **Hart Williford**, CEO - Verisign Corporation

Business owners, from page 1

At the same time, business owners also can apply for a provisional FEIN, a process that formerly required more than 90 minutes to fill out forms and additional time for processing. The online application takes only minutes to complete, and the provisional FEIN is assigned immediately.

"We are glad to be able to offer this new service to Georgia business owners," said Governor Sonny Perdue. "In addition to speeding the application process, the new online systems reduce the need to visit a state or federal office and offer the convenience of applying anytime of the day or night."

Georgia is one of two states selected to participate in the pilot project to integrate online business registration and the FEIN application. DOR and GTA collaborated on the project with the federal Small Business Administration (SBA), which provided the funding. EzGov, which specializes in electronic government services, developed the application using Georgia's business requirements. SBA plans to offer the service to other states.

Georgia's Web portal is a single point of access to online government information and services. Available services include online driver's license renewal and "Where's my child's check," which enables parents to go online to check the status of their child support payments. Other services will be added. ■

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All technology acquisitions—including those exempt from GTA review or costing less than \$50,000—are subject to the bidding and purchase process outlined in the Technology Procurement Policy, Release No. 3.

On the Web at www.gta.georgia.gov

- Technology Review Policy, Release No. 3
- Technology Procurement Policy, Release No. 3
- Agency Request for Technology Form (State agencies use the form to submit information to GTA about proposed technology initiatives.) ■

Vital Records improves customer service with advanced voice mail system

Vital Records recently completed phase one of a three-phase project to re-engineer its existing operations. As a result, customers are now able to obtain information quickly and easily through an automated telephone information system.

"Being able to get what you want by hitting a couple of buttons saves customers a great deal of time," said **Matt Mills, deputy director of Vital Records.**

"Automated solutions are an important part of our package of customer service offerings."

GTA assisted Vital Records in selecting and purchasing the new system. GTA technicians also installed the system. Implementation was completed a month ahead of schedule and under budget.

The larger project to re-engineer Vital Records' business processes and support them with new technology is the vision of **Michael Lavoie, state registrar and director of Vital Records.** He's now moving forward with phase two, which calls for installing a new state-of-the-art document imaging and management system to convert paper documents to electronic format. Eventually, the public will be able to obtain copies of various vital event documents over the state Web portal.

Using technology to improve customer service

Vital Records receives an average of 1,300 calls each day. The new system, which can answer and respond to nine calls simultaneously, is now managing more than half of all calls. It's the first voice mail/automated attendant system of its type in state government and the most technologically advanced.

Customers who need basic information—such as office hours or directions—can select from a menu to activate pre-recorded messages in English or Spanish. The system is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. During routine office hours, customers can also opt out of the

automated menu if they want to speak with a customer support representative.

Before the system was installed, only one telephone operator was available to answer four incoming phone lines. Mr. Mills said an estimated 18 percent of calls were "dropped" either through unsuccessful transfers or because

callers got tired of waiting and hung up. Three full-time customer support representatives are now able to spend more time answering questions about birth certificates, marriage licenses and other records.

"Our staff was overwhelmed by the number of telephone calls," Mr. Mills said. "We knew a significant amount of their time was spent answering basic ques-

tions, like how to find our office. The new system frees up staff to work with people who need other kinds of help."

Another benefit of the new system is its ability to generate management information reports. The system traces each call to see what type of information and which work units callers are selecting from the automated menu.

"If we know a particular unit is receiving twice as many calls as another, we can allocate more resources," Mr. Mills said. "We have data to support our decision making."

The system even displays a "voice mail viewer" on a computer screen, enabling staff to track current activity on all nine lines as calls are answered and routed as menu options are selected.

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Vital Records' new automated information system features a menu providing quick access to recorded messages for callers needing basic information. Priscia White (above) can now spend more time with callers who need additional assistance.



Matt Mills points to an online database of frequently asked questions, still under development, that telephone operators at Vital Records can quickly access when answering calls. "The whole idea is to provide information to the public as fast as possible so they can be on their way," he said.

GTA board names Wade acting director, CIO



Tom Wade has been named acting executive director of the Georgia Technology Authority and state chief information officer by GTA's Board of Directors. His appointment was effective December 10, 2002.

Mr. Wade has been GTA's chief operating officer since July 2000. His career in public service includes many years with the Georgia Department of Human Resources, where he held the positions of assistant commissioner and deputy commissioner.

"GTA will continue in the direction set by its guiding principles," Mr. Wade said. "I am mindful of how important our day-to-day work is, and we will stay on course to achieve our goals and objectives."

While Mr. Wade serves as acting executive director, Cigdem Delano assumes his responsibilities as chief operating officer. Ms. Delano will coordinate the work of several groups focusing on streamlining GTA's processes. ■

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"We can see the call when it comes in, where it goes, who they talk to and when they hang up," said David Sands, who oversaw the project for GTA.

Technology alone won't ensure success

New technology and business processes alone won't transform an organization, Mr. Mills said. It also takes commitment from employees. When Vital Records began its project to redesign business processes, it also launched a new program to give employees a more active voice in their workplace. The program is called "Great Place to Work" and is lead by a team of Vital Records employees who are making a positive difference.

"The program is creating a more receptive attitude toward new technology and business processes," said Jerry Norris, who is consulting with Vital Records on the project.

Mr. Mills added, "We have been able to design features for the new system that people who are actually doing the job feel are important. When you unleash creativity in people, it's amazing what they can do to make things better for their jobs and our customers." ■

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